2;Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

353 777 No home was really furnished until it had a small wooden iconostas which contained an icon, a picture of the Virgin or a saint. The iconostas was usually placed in the east or southeast corner of the room. In case some disaster befell the family, they found out to which saint the unlucky day belonged, and got a picture of him for their iconostas. Thereafter, on his name day they did no work and used holy water in the house. In the *kandilo,* the small lamp before the icon, they burned olive oil during church time and on the eve of holidays. In case the family had used holy water at home in the hope of curing some sick person, the flowers with which the water had been sprinkled were placed on the household shrine.

352 285 Usually there were a number of small implements or articles scattered about the room. A two-edged axe might be leaning against the door frame, and old clothes or bed clothes hanging from a long thick pole in a corner. I often saw in common use small baskets obtained from the gypsies. For pay, the gypsies asked the purchaser to fill the basket with beans or wheat, which they retained. The peasants themselves, especially the shepherds and goatherds with much leisure on their hands, made the very large baskets or hampers used for carrying hay or straw. These baskets stood in the entryway or hung under the eaves.

312 Only a few of the Dragalevtsy homes had a washstand, but even for these the water had to be carried from the nearest fountain. Over and over again the peasant women would say:

"We would like to have running water in our houses because it would help us a lot and make our life a little easier. But we don't have the money, and all this needs much money for installing a water system in the house, and also we would have to pay quite a high tax to the Obshtina. Anyway, the fountains in the village are sufficient and it doesn't take us much time to go and get water."

● 415 312 The water was carried from the fountains either in clay vessels called *stomni* or in the more modern large copper vessels called *mentsi.* The long sticks on the ends of which the water vessels were suspended were called *kobilitsi.* The water from the fountains was used only for preparing food and drinking, and the water for the animals came from the little brooks in the street. Maintaining personal cleanliness was

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

Maintaining personal cleanliness was very difficult indeed. Not only did the villagers have to contend with the problem of carrying water but also with the lack of privacy in their crowded dwellings. One peasant said: 515

"We have no public bathhouse in our village, so only the wealthier people can take baths, because they are able to go to the nearby villages two or three times during the summer and make use of the mineral baths. In general, we do not bathe in fall, winter, or spring. If we bathe in the summer at home, we use a wooden tub and warm water. Sometimes when the weather is warm, men and women [of course, separately] bathe in the river. When the women are bathing there must be someone to guard against their being seen by others. Regularly at least once a week we wash our heads with soap and hot water, and also wash our faces and hands in the morning, but not necessarily with soap. No, we do not wash our hands before every meal, nor do we ever wash our teeth."

Throughout Bulgaria it was a common courtesy to say to a friend who had just emerged from a bath, *"Chestito banya"* or "Congratulations on your bath." However, if one dreamed of bathing, the villager would tell him that some trouble, perhaps death, was imminent. [787]

I was surprised to find that some of the poorest homes had electricity. The occupants explained: 373

"Oh, we find electricity cheaper than petroleum lamps provided we use small electric bulbs. Those who do not have electricity in their homes know of this advantage but have never saved up enough money to put in the wires."

And there they sat on a winter's night: the older women doing fine, closely stitched embroidery, the girls knitting, and the man perhaps reading a newspaper. The only illumination in the whole room, except for the flicker of the fire in the sheet metal stove, was a fly-specked twenty-watt bulb swinging from the ceiling. 512 373

The two or three large kettles hanging over or resting on the floor beside the stove, the knife and fork rack on the wall, and the few pottery dishes stacked on the kneading trough called my attention to the peasant's food habits. This was the way the people described their diet: 415 262

113, 323, 462, 415, 354, 789 Bulgaria EE1

[For information pertaining to the production of pottery, ceramic utensils, earth ovens, by women in Bulgaria, and associated magical beliefs, see 3: Filipovic, E13 Balkan Peoples, category 116.]